



The
Institution of Engineers,
Australia

Mr Ron Powell's commitment to the conservation of stone public buildings and structures in New South Wales is driven by a passion for the historic architecture of Sydney the Sandstone City, and the use of sandstone as a natural building material.

The New South Wales Government's *Centenary Stonework Program* was launched within the Public Works Department in 1991. Its major functions in conserving the State's heritage stone structures include safety inspections, the procurement of high quality stone, developing heritage trade skills, research and development and maintaining a related data base. This has produced an invaluable reservoir of knowledge and skill, and a record of the history of the structures.

Since assuming management of the Program in 1999 Ron Powell has demonstrated considerable passion and dedication. He has influenced Ministers of the Crown and Directors-General of agencies in the importance of conserving the heritage of our stone structures; he has highlighted the heritage value of the works to the community and industry through the media and frequent presentations; and he has promoted the benefits of the Program and developed a partnering spirit with clients, stakeholders and the community.

Ron's high level of personal energy has resulted in significant achievements such as

- establishment of the George Proudman Fellowship to encourage qualified stonemasons in further developing their knowledge and skills;
- the accumulation of a stockpile of Yellowblock Sandstone for future conservation work by working with developers and geotechnical consultants;
- successful marketing of the Program;
- conservation of the stone fabric of some of Australia's finest sandstone icons, including Sydney Hospital, State Library of NSW, Australian Museum, Sydney Observatory and Darlinghurst Courthouse; and
- bringing the history and significance of the Saunders quarrying operations and of 'Yellowblock' to public attention, by working with the Sydney Engineering Heritage Committee to have an historic engineering plaque fixed on the site of Saunders' Paradise quarry at Pyrmont.